CAROLINGIAN MISSIONARY ACTIVITY, 690-814

BY

RICHARD EUGENE SULLIVAN

A.B., University of Nebraska, 1942

A.M., University of Illinois, 1947

AN ABSTRACT OF A THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN HISTORY

IN THE GRADUATE COLLEGE OF THE

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS, 1949.

URBANA, ILLINOIS

1949

CAROLINGIAN MISSIONARY ACTIVITY, 690-814

BY

RICHARD EUGENE SULLIVAN

A.B., University of Nebraska, 1942

A.M., University of Illinois, 1947

AN ABSTRACT OF A THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN HISTORY

IN THE GRADUATE COLLEGE OF THE

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS, 1949.

URBANA, ILLINOIS

1 9 4 9

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to express my appreciation for the prompt and courteous service given by the staff of the Library of the University of Illinois in acquiring many of the books used in this study. I also thank the staff of the History Department of the University of Illinois, and especially Professor F. C. Dietz for his helpful guidance in the preparation of this thesis. I am deeply indebted to Dr. Charles E. Odegaard not only for his painstaking and constructive criticism of every detail of this study but also for his many suggestions concerning the general import of medieval history. His enthusiastic interest in the Middle Ages and his constant concern over the progress of this study have provided the inspiration necessary to permit me to finish this dissertation. Finally, I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to my wife, Vivianne Johnson Sullivan, for her invaluable aid in preparing the final copy of this thesis but even more for her patience and encouragement.

CAROLINGIAN MISSIONARY ACTIVITY, 690-814

One of the greatest challenges to the Carolingians in their efforts to extend and perfect the kingdom of God on earth was the existence of great numbers of hostile pagans on the Christian frontier. The Carolingian answer to this challenge was a vigorous and successful effort to convert part of these pagans to the Christian faith. This dissertation is devoted to a study of Carolingian missionary activity between 690 and 814. The chief emphasis has not been placed upon the events connected with the expansion of Christianity, since this phase of missionary activity has been described by a variety of scholars. However, a general outline of missionary history has been undertaken in order to identify properly the chief missionary figures, to show where and when each worked, and to note their successes. This outline of missionary history has formed a proper background for a problem which has been given less attention by scholars dealing with missionary history. The primary concern in this study has been the description of the techniques and methods used by Carolingian missionaries to win converts to Christianity. In developing this theme an attempt has been made to describe the forces which promoted the vigorous missionary activity during the Carolingian period. The zeal with which the Carolingians sought to win converts has suggested that the missionaries proceeded to their task with several well-developed ideas of the most suitable methods to be used in winning converts. Finally an attempt has been made to describe the methods actually employed by missionaries to establish themselves in pagan areas, to convince the pagans to surrender their old religion, and to organize the new converts into the church. By pulling together the widely scattered references in Carolingian literature which pertain to each of these general phases of missionary activity it is hoped that the techniques and methods used to extend Christianity will emerge more clearly, thus providing a more complete picture of Carolingian missionary activity than can be gained from those descrip-

tions of the expansion of the Christian realm which concern themselves primarily with the external events leading to the conversion of pagans in the eighth and ninth centuries.

The vigor of Carloingian missionary activity can best be judged by the extension of the Christian frontier in western Europe between 690 and 814. The map of western Europe in 690 presents three distinct religious belts. The completely Christianized areas included Italy, Spain, the British Isles, and Gaul. North of the Scheldt river, east of the Rhine, and north of the Alps there existed a partially Christianized area within which Christian influences had long been felt as a result of Frankish influence and of Irish missionary activity. Included in this belt were a few Franks, the Alemannians, the Thuringians, and the Bavarians. Throughout this area pagan practices flourished alongside Christianity. The Christian church lacked the organization necessary to crush the pagan remnants. Most of this territory had been sufficiently affected by Christianity to require no new missionary activity. But further organization of the church along with a strenuous effort to crush paganism was required before Christianity could claim a full victory throughout this area. Beyond this partially Christianized zone lay the pagan world. The chief pagan peoples bordering on the Christianized part of western Europe were the Frisians, the Saxons, the Slavs and the Avars. By 690 the Frisians had moved southward along the coast of the North Sea to the mouth of the Scheldt. East of them were the Saxons, who dominated the area from the North Sea to the Rhineland and from the middle Rhine across central Germany to the confluence of the Saale and the Elbe rivers. The region east of the Elbe was populated by Slavs. The Slavs and Avars also lay along the Christian frontier from central Germany across the Danube into the eastern Alps and thence to the Adriatic. Christian influences had been virually absent in all these areas prior to 690. Most of the population adhered to their ancient pagan religions and were openly hostile to Christianity.

At the death of Charlemagne the religious map had been changed considerably. As a result of a series of Frankish military victories and a vigorous missionary movement by the Christian church, the Frisians, the Saxons, and many of the Slavs and Avars had been incorporated into the Frankish empire and had been made Christians. In 814 the Christian frontier had been advanced to the North Sea from modern Belgium to the mouth of the Elbe. The conquest and conversion of the Saxons advanced the Christian frontier eastward as far as the course of the Elbe river. Most of the Slavs who had pushed into central Germany prior to 690 had been converted, so that the Böhmer Wald formed the boundry of the Christian realm in central Europe. Between the Danube and the Adriatic a large area was Christianized between 690 and 814. By the latter date Christianity had advanced to a line drawn from the Raab river southwestward to Dalmatian coast. Thus between the terminal dates of this study the area bounded on one side by the Scheldt, the Rhine, and the Alps and on the other by the North Sea, the Elbe, the Saale, the Böhmer Wald, the middle Danube, the Raab, and the Adriatic was Christianized.

The missionary activity which led to the Christianization of the inhabitants of the area described above can be divided into two distinct periods. The first period, beginning in about 690, was dominated by Anglo-Saxon priests and monks who came to the continent for the sole purpose of engaging in missionary work. The Anglo-Saxons attempted to establish missionary posts in several different areas. One group, of which Willibrord was the chief figure, established itself in southern Frisia. At least two missionary parties, led by Suidbert and the Ewald brothers, attempted to carry Christianity to the Saxons about 700. Boniface and a large following undertook the conversion of the pagans in Hesse and Thuringia. After his mission was well established in Frisia, Willibrord attempted to carry Christianity to the pagans

living in northern Frisia and to the Danes. Of all of these attempts to establish missionary posts only two achieved permanent success. Before his death in 739, Willibrord had succeeded in converting most of the Frisians south and west of the Fli river. As a result of his work a new archiepiscopal see had been established at Utrecht along with a flourishing monastery and school. Meanwhile, Boniface had completed the Christianization of Hesse and Thuringia and had been the chief agent in the organization of a series of bishoprics in eastern Germany and in Bavaria, thus providing the Christian forces in these areas with the means of wiping out the last traces of paganism. However, the relatively small advances made by Christianity during the more than half a century after 690 is attested by the fact that in 754 Boniface suffered martyrdom in that part of Frisia just east of the Zuiderzee. After his death the Anglo-Saxon missionary effort gradually lost its vigor. From about 755 to 770 some Anglo-Saxons, including especially Lebuin and Willehad, continued missionary efforts in Frisia but won no great successes. The advance of Christianity had been checked temporarily. However, before the Anglo-Saxon movement lost its vigor, it had resulted in noteworthy advances of the Christian frontier in Frisia and in eastern Germany. Moreover, the Anglo-Saxon missionaries had been preeminently successful in organizing the church in areas which had been only semi-Christianized in 690.

While the Anglo-Saxons were laboring to win converts on the northern and northeastern frontier of European Christendom, the Bavarian church was able to muster enough vigor to attempt missionary work among the Slavs in Carinthia. The bishopric of Salzburg, under the direction of Virgil, was the most important center of missionary activity during this period.

The second great wave of missionary activity between 690 and 814 occurred during the reign of Charlemagne. As a result of his numerous military victories several large areas were open-

ed to missionaries. The occasion for the first burst of missionary activity was the increasing friction between the Franks and the Saxons. Between 772 and 782 Charlemagne led a series of punitive raids against the Saxons. During the course of these raids an attempt was made by Charlemagne to require the acceptance of Christianity as a condition of peace and to win adherents to the Christian cause by granting rewards. To speed up the Christianization of Saxony Charlemagne divided Saxony into several regions and assigned the responsibility of spreading the faith in these areas to several Frankish bishoprics and monasteries. Prior to 782 many Saxons were baptized as a result of Charlemagne's policy. However, in 782 the Saxons made a large-scale attempt to avert Frankish domination; the revolt resulted in the repudiation of Christianity by most of the Saxons. To preclude further resistance by the Saxons Charlemagne decided upon a policy of forceful subjugation. The next few years were marked by bitter warfare which resulted in the final conquest of the Saxons. In line with his forceful political policy, Charlemagne adopted a Draconian religious policy. In the *Capitulatio de partibus Saxoniae,* issued in 782 or 785, he required that the Saxons abandon paganism and accept Christianity with a death sentence threatened for refusal. During the succeeding years the Christianization of Saxony proceeded rapidly. Christian establishments were founded in nearly all of the main population centers in Saxony. At least three of them, Bremen, Paderborn, and Munster, had been made into bishoprics by 814. Shortly after Charlemagne's death several others also became episcopal sees. The Saxon hostility to Christianity abated slowly but steadily, as can be seen by the fact that the edict of 782 (785) was replaced by another in 797 which placed the Saxons on the same religious footing as the rest of the inhabitants of the Frankish empire. Thus by 814 the Saxons had been Christianized.

The pagan Frisians living along the coast of the North Sea

were also Christianized as a result of the vigiorous move to convert the Saxons. By 814 all Frisia had been organized under the bishops of Utrecht, Bremen, and Munster.

Even before the Saxons and the Frisians had been completely converted the Franks undertook the conversion of newly conquered Slavs and Avars on the southeastern frontier of the Frankish kingdom. As a result of the incorporation of Bavaria into the Frankish state in 788, the Franks assumed the responsibility of defending the southeastern frontier. A series of wars soon followed. By 796 the Franks crushed the Slav-Avar resistance in this frontier region. Christianization followed conquest; when the decisive military campaign was organized in 796, a missionary offensive was also organized at a synod held at the Frankish military camp on the Danube. The newly conquered areas were divided among several bishoprics, including especially Salzburg, Passau, and Aquileia. Missionary bands sent out from these centers were successful in winning numerous converts and in building many new churches. Although the conversion of the Slavic population of the Balkan peninsula had not been completed by 814, the way had been opened for further missionary effort in the succeeding years.

During the reign of Charlemagne the conversion of the Slavs inhabiting the eastern extremities of Germany also progressed steadily. The bishops of Wurzburg were especially instrumental in baptizing these Slavs, in establishing churches, and in instituting priests throughout the area as far east as the Böhmer Wald.

The missionary successes outlined above resulted from the combined efforts of many men, including Frankish princes, popes, Anglo-Saxon pilgrims, and Frankish clergymen of all ranks. Several powerful forces were at work to bring about this cooperative effort and to produce the results which allow one to

characterize the period between 690 and 814 as a particularly successful one in missionary history. Some of these forces were primarily religious in character. There was a general feeling among all Christians of the Carolingian period that it was a Christian duty to propagate the faith. In certain aspects of its application this idea had a definite Carolingian stamp. The papacy in this period developed the notion that it had a particular and direct responsibility for the increase of the Christian flock. The Franks also viewed themselves as God's chosen people and thus felt a special obligation to filfil His will by extending His earthly kingdom. Another religious motive which aroused widespread interest in missionary activity was the conviction that missionary labor was a good work of the highest order and that either direct participation in missionary work or any kind of aid offered to missionaries was bound to result in a bountiful reward in the next world. Of special significance in promoting vigorous missionary activity during the Carolingian period was the connection established between the ideal monastic life and missionary work. The experience of the English monastic system in the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons and the peculiar emphasis placed upon the pilgrimage for the love of God (*peregrinatio pro amore Dei*) in Irish monastic circles led to the development of the idea that the most perfect expression of the ascetic life was the abandonment of a fixed abode among friendly surroundings for a strenous life spreading the Christian religion in foreign parts. Numerous monks left England and found a suitable scene for achieving their ideal sacrifice among the continental pagans. A final religious force which promoted missionary activity arose from the theoratic temper of the Carolingian period. The Carolingian rulers felt that the chief obligation connected with their princely office was the defense of the Christian realm from any force which threatened to destroy Christianity. As a result they were prompted to lead a vigorous onslaught on paganism and

to insist upon the incorporation of non-Christians into the Christian realm as a means of obliterating the threat to the true faith.

Operating in conjunction with these religious forces were several political forces which encouraged and supported missionary activity. The Carolingian dynasty was led to support and even insist upon the spread of Christianity for two reasons. The political power of the pagan nations offered a constant threat to the security of the Carolingian house in its attempt to establish itself as the legitimate ruling dynasty for the Franks. The possibility that his external hostility could be mitigated by destroying one of the chief bonds which supported pagan political power, namely, pagan religion, led the Carolingian princes to encourage the conversion of the pagans. Moreover, when the Carolingian rulers were forced to resort to conquest as a means of destroying the external threat, they viewed Christianity as an invaluable aid in the tremendous task of incorporating diverse peoples into the Frankish empire. Christianity became virtually the sole common denominator in the heterogenous state created by the Carolingians. The papacy also lent its support to missionary activity for political reasons. By the beginning of the eighth century the position of the see at Rome was in a state of change as a result of a clash of interests with Constantinople and of a new political situation in Italy. This shift imposed upon the papacy the urgent necessity of finding new support and turned its attention in a new direction. The popes ecouraged missionary work among the Germans in the hope that missionary successes would bring new and unclaimed peoples under their sway. Carolingian bishops and abbots were quick to see in missionary activity a means of increasing their power and influence. By taking the initiative in converting pagans they could assume control of extensive areas, enjoy the income which resulted from an enlargement of the Christian realm, and partake of the liberal rewards which the Carolingian rulers betowed upon those who engaged in mis-

sionary work. A final political factor which promoted missionary activity was the constant inclination of pagan political leaders to seek Frankish political support by accepting Christianity and imposing it on their subjects. These moves to curry Frankish political favor invariably led to the creation of a Christian faction in the pagan world and opened the way for missionary efforts with the assurance of some degree of support for the missionaries.

However, the missionary zeal engendered by the many reasons which prompted men to undertake the conversion of the pagans did not cause the Carolingian missionaries to rush blindly into a conflict with paganism. Instead they proceeded to their task with rather well-defined ideas of the most suitable methods and procedures to be used in winning converts. These ideas are expressed in the writings of several figures who were not involved in actual missionary work but who wrote primarily in an advisory capacity, directing their remarks to those who contemplated missionary work. As a result of their inadequate and one-sided knowledge of the history of the spread of Christianity, most Carolingian missionary theorists saw no harm in forcing pagans to surrender their ancient religion. As a result of their knowledge of the past and of their own experiences, they bothered themselves little with the necessity of changing the pagan's mind on purely religious grounds. They depended upon and even encouraged the use of force to bring large numbers of docile pagans into the hands of missionaries. But once the pagans were prepared for conversion, there was a general feeling that some care must be exercised to impress upon them the religious meaning of conversion. Although the pagan really had no choice of accepting or rejecting Christianity, he must be taught the meaning of his new religion. The Carolingian missionary theorists assumed that the superiority of Christianity was bound to appeal to the pagan if the faith were properly presented to him. To achieve this end the theorists turned their chief attentions to the establishment of a

procedure for instructing the pagans in order that they would become Christians with at least some knowledge of what was involved. Most theorists decided that a certain minimum body of knowledge must be transmitted to the pagans prior to their baptism. Each must be taught to worship one God in place of his old gods. Each must be impressed with the idea that the whole aim of human life was to prepare the soul for everlasting life. Each must be introduced to a theory of history which interpreted all of the past in terms of a victory of Christianity as a final manifestation of God's will. When the pagan understood these basic tenets of the faith, he could be baptized with the assurance that he would remain a Christian and would see the folly of his old religion. Once the pagan was baptized, it was necessary to lead him skillfully into the ways of Christian conduct and practice. By preaching and instruction he should be shown how to avoid sin and to become a full-fledged member of the church. The missionary theorists felt that the creation of an integrated organization was a vital part of bringing the former pagan to the full practice of Christian life. Thus there was an insistence among missionary theorists that the new Christians be organized into the existing organizational framework of the church as quickly as possible after their conversion.

These ideas provided general direction for the methods adopted by Carolingian missionaries in their encounter with the pagans. However, the missionary alone had to contend with the problem of contacting the pagan and compelling him to surrender his old religion in favor of Christianity. Carolingian missionary method can be described under three broad headings, each involving a wide range of problems, but each including several closely related phases of missionary work.

The first phase of missionary activity entailed the establishment of permanent missionary posts in pagan areas. Missionary ventures were inaugurated by sending groups of qualified priests

and monks to contact the pagans. These expeditions were organized and equipped at various places and by various people during the Carolingian period. Especially notable in this capacity were the English and Irish monasteries. The missionaries centers which the Anglo-Saxons established on the continent also exerted every effort to organize new expeditions into pagan territories. The Frankish kings, and especially Charlemagne, often took the initiative in sending missionary parties to pagan territories. Frankish ecclesiastical magnates also contributed to the organization of missionary parties.

The missionary parties were usually small, although missionaries almost never contacted the pagans individually. The size of the parties was undoubtedly limited by the fact that missionary duty was voluntary. The rigors of missionary life, dramatized by several cases of martyrdom and severe persecution, undoubtedly limited the number of volunteers. Certain qualifications seem to have been required of those given the task of contacting the pagans; this selectivity probably operated to keep the missionary groups small.

The missionary parties were supplied with some equipment by the centers which sent them into pagan areas. Most of them carried letters of introduction designed to secure food and lodging during their travels. Each group also carried the necessary religious equipment with them. Possibly they were supplied with the means to purchase transportation and food. Generally speaking, however, the missionaries were not blessed with a large amount of wordly goods when they set out on their journeys. They depended upon their own resourcefulness and the hospitality of others for their welfare.

The necessity of travel into pagan territory placed a severe strain on Carolingian missionary parties. They were usually able to follow rather well-defined routes for at least part of their

journey. In their travels, they used whatever means of transportation was at hand, including ships and horses; sometimes, however, they were forced to travel on foot. Often they were able to enjoy the hospitality offered by a friendly clergymen or a local magnate. It was not unusual, however, for missionaries to pitch their own camp. Apparently they had to bargain with pagans for their food once they were in pagan territory. Even under the best conditions missionary travel was beset by numerous inconveniences, by danger of attack, by uncertainty as to where refuge might be found, and by a scarcity of even the essentials of life.

Occasionally missionaries were directed to a specific place in the pagan world. However, in other instances expeditionary parties were organized for the purpose of investigating the most likely spot for establishing a permanent missionary post. In such cases the expedition traveled through the pagan world trying to find a place where they could win converts to the new faith. Usually they sought to find a place where they would not have to contend with hostile political forces. Thus these scouting parties tried to contract the pagan rulers and to secure from them permission to begin missionary work. In this connection, missionary parties were usually accorded generous treatment by the pagans. Not until the missionaries actually tried to win converts did pagan hostility arise. As long as missionary parties conducted themselves as foreign embassies, the pagans allowed them to travel about and to investigate the prospects of establishing missionary posts.

Once a missionary party had been organized, had selected a scene for its activity, and had arrived among the pagans, it was virtually isolated. Its most important immediate task was to provide for its own self-sufficiency. In order to support itself every Carolingian missionary party usually sought to acquire a dependable source of income. Since land was the basic element of eighth century economy, the missionaries sought to acquire land to be

used in supporting missionary activity. In some cases, missionaries received grants in the area in which they were actually working. In other cases, the missionary personnel or the center from which missionary work had originated received grants of land in areas which were already Christianized, the income from which land was to be applied to the support of the new missionary establishment. Pagans, deeply impressed by their first contacts with the Christian missionaries, often granted land to the missionaries. The Frankish rulers usually made grants to missionary centers outside the pagan areas with the understanding that the recipients would support missionary work. In the case of the conversion of Saxony, the Frankish state decreed that the Saxons must assume the responsibility for providing sufficient land to support the newly established church. As a result of these factors, the missionary parties which undertook the conversion of pagans were usually richly endowed with land very soon after they entered the pagan world.

The utilization of this land as a means of supporting missionary work is not always clear. Especially troublesome is the problem of determining how missionaries operating at a distance from the Christian world were supported from centers already existing in the Christianized world. It is clear, however, that the most successful missionary posts were created as a result of the efforts of missionaries to utilize grants of land which they received in the pagan world. Almost invariably the missionaries who acquired land in the vicinity of their proposed scene of activity established a monstery as the most effective means of insuring their own welfare. By clearing the land, planting crops, constructing buildings, acquiring herds of animals, and securing an adequate labor force, the missionaries were not only able to maintain their missionary work but also were able to create the most affluent economic establishments in the pagan world. Thus the missionary centers quickly grew rich, adding new vigor to the program to win converts among the pagans.

In spite of the evidence which can be accumulated to show the success of the missionaries in acquiring the means of supporting their efforts, the skill with which these resources were utilized, and the steady increase of wealth in the missionary establishments, the early period of every missionary venture was marked by numerous hardships. Missionary activity itself was an arduous task, demanding constant travel under adverse conditions. The missionaries were constantly threatened by pagan violence, which in several cases was fatal to the missionaries and which on numerous other occasions resulted in complete destruction of long years of labor. The missionaries were constantly beset by poverty in areas where economic development was probably far behind that of the Frankish state in general and where warfare and internal disorder was almost constant during the transitional period which marked the subjugation of pagan political power to the Franks.

However, one of the most noteworthy accomplishments of the Carolingian missionaries was the effectiveness with which they supplied the means which permitted the Christians to remain permanently in pagan areas where none of the means through which the church supported itself existed prior to the arrival of the missionaries.

Even while the missionary parties were struggling to establish permanent Christian posts in the pagan world, they turned their attention to the end for which they had entered the pagan world, the conversion of the pagans. Their strategy in spreading the faith was dictated by the situation in which they found themselves. Forced to congregate in fixed centers in order to maintain themselves, the missionaries utilized these centers as posts from which to circulate among the pagan population in order to spread the faith. They moved from one small pagan settlement to another trying to contact as many individual pagans as possible. Yet they never lost contact with the missionary center which

supported them. The only effective leadership in Carolingian missionary history developed at these widely scattered missionary centers. Often the abbot of the monsteries guided the activity of his missionary monks. In other cases where a church was the chief Christian establishment in the pagan world, the priest or bishop in charge of the church guided the destiny of the missionaries circulating among the neighboring pagans. In this fashion at least some uniformity was achieved in the conversion of the pagans with the missionary posts established as a means of supporting missionary activity furnishing the nerve center for the religious aspects of missionary work.

The general missionary strategy described above eventually brought the missionary priests and monks into personal contact with the pagan population in the vicinity of a missionary center. Their task at this point involved undermining the pagan religions to the extent that the pagans were willing to replace them with Christianity. The pagan religions with which the missionaries had to deal were polytheistic. The pagans felt that their gods possessed the power necessary to determine the course of human life. The pagans probably possessed a body of mythology which explained the origin of the gods and of the world. Some kind of hierarchy of gods had developed; at the top of this hierarchy were a few all-powerful deities who were rather far removed from the affairs of human life. To fill this gap between the great gods and the minor affairs of everyday life the pagans inhabited the world about them with a variety of elves, spirits, departed souls, witches, and demons, each of which had some particular sphere of activity in which it reigned supreme. The real strength of paganism did not rest on the peculiar character or the exclusiveness of its deities. The tenacity with which the pagans held to their ancient gods stemmed from their reliance upon the gods for aid in the conduct of every phase of human life. An elaborate system of worship had developed in order to

placate the angry spirits of the gods, to curry their favor in any undertaking, or to divine the proper course to take in any difficult situation. This complete dependence upon the gods engendered a reluctance to break with the traditional religious system out of fear that the gods would retaliate and that life would go awry without their help. The pagans were primarily concerned with this world and its rewards. A mystical, otherworldly religion, based upon sacrifice, suffering, and good works for the sake of future reward was foreign to the pagan mind. Morality in the Christian sense had little appeal to them. Thus there was very little common ground between the pagan religions and Christianity. The missionaries usually took an uncompromising attitude toward the outward aspect of paganism—polytheism, the pagan forms of worship, superstitions, and the worship of idols.

To destroy the hold of paganism and to replace it with Christianity the missionaries used a variety of arguments and inducements. The explanation of the nature of Christianity was used constantly to undermine paganism. On some occasions the missionaries attempted to explain the nature of Christianity by individual instruction. However, the small number of missionaries available made a wide application of this method impossible. It was usually employed only in cases involving pagan princes. Preaching to larger groups was the usual method employed to present Christianity to the pagans. The information pertaining to the exact details of preaching to pagan audiences is particularly limited because there are no surviving sermons which were delivered to the pagans. Apparently the missionaries moved from area to area speaking to whatever audiences they could attract either with the help of friendly pagans or through their own efforts. The content of their sermons can be reconstructed only from indirect evidence. The sermons probably dealt with the Christian view of the origin and development of the universe and of man, using Scripture as the source for this account. The mis-

sionary preachers also attempted to compare the Christian God and the pagan gods, seeking to show the vast superiority of the Christian God over the pagan deities. The preachers also attacked nearly all phases of pagan worship, trying to ridicule the practices by which the pagans attempted to win the favor of their gods. There is some evidence that the missionaries hinted at some of the main tenets of the Christian faith in their sermons; but generally this difficult task was not undertaken in the early stages of the attempt to convert the pagans.

A second means used by the missionaries to convince the pagans to give up their ancient religions was a forceful attack on the objects sacred to the pagans. By the destruction of pagan temples or idols under the proper circumstances the missionaries were able to furnish concrete proof to the impressionable pagans of the inability of the pagan gods to avenge hostile attacks. This method was especially effective in the eyes of the pagans who lived in terror of angering the gods and thus disrupting the normal course of life.

Another avenue of approach to the pagans was the offer of material reward for the acceptance of Christianity. The missionaries usually acted as intermediaries between the Frankish princes and the pagan rulers in this respect. By accepting Christianity a portion of the pagan nobility could virtually assure itself of the support of the Franks and could thus gain new power and prestige in pagan society, which was in the process of subjugation to the Frankish state.

The missionaries possessed a powerful means of impressing pagans through the medium of the civilization which they represented. The methods employed by the missionaries to clear previously useless tracts of land, to plant crops, to build impressive buildings, to produce increased wealth from the land which came into their possession undoubtely interested and impressed the

pagans. All of these innovations were instrumental in arousing the pagan interest in the preaching and teaching of the purveyors of these ideas.

The exemplary conduct of the missionaries in their relations with the pagans may have offered a means whereby the Christians could induce the pagans to leave their old religion and accept Christianity. Although the sources are not complete enough to permit a final decision on this matter, it seems probable that the courage, the industry, the kindness, the charity, and the zeal of the missionaries all contributed to a growth of good will between the pagans and the missionaries, and thus aided in convincing the pagans to accept the religion of the missionaries.

A final factor which had a part in breaking down pagan resistance was the support given the missionaries by the Frankish state. By pledging protection to the missionaries and by outlawing paganism the Frankish state attempted to provide the missionaries with an advantage over the pagans. Although the Frankish state was seldom able to supply the missionaries with completely adequate support, the threat of Frankish intervention usually caused the pagans to give careful consideration to any overt actions against the missionaries. This Frankish threat undoubtedly weakened the pagan will to resist the spread of Christianity.

The pagan reaction to these arguments was varied. Often the pagans attempted to resist the missionaries by arguing that paganism was equal to Christianity, by driving the missionaries away from particular localities, or by organizing a full scale war against the missionaries and their sponsors, the Franks. In nearly every case for which there is any evidence it appears that at least part of the pagan population favored an unqualified rejection of Christianity. However, the pagan resistance was almost always tempered by the willingness of some of the pagans to accept

Christianity. If those pagans favorably inclined toward Christianity were powerful enough, then the victory of Christianity was virtually assured. Of vital importance in the struggle was the influence of the upper class of pagan society. If the pagan rulers and the nobility could be converted, their influence on the rest of the pagan population was sufficient to bring about the rapid conversion of the whole population. Generally speaking, the Carolingian missionaries were successful in winning the necessary support in pagan society to insure a quick victory for Christianity. Thus in most cases huge numbers of converts were won in a relatively short period of time.

The final phase of missionary work involved the incorporation of the pagans who consented to become Christians into the church. It was necessary to administer baptism to the new converts. Although there is some evidence that an attempt was made by the missionaries to provide the pagans with at least a minimum of instruction prior to baptism, the usual course adopted by Carolingian missionaries was to complete the process of baptism as quickly as possible. Thus mass baptisms performed without any thought of prebaptismal instruction were the usual practice in the missionary field. Even where speed was the keynote the baptism of large numbers of pagans, including whole nations, required a long period of time. Thus in every missionary area one can find evidence that missionaries had to continue to administer baptism to pagans for many years after they had won their first missionary successes. What evidence there is to describe the actual performance of the baptismal rite suggests that the Christians were able to create a vivid impression on the pagan mind in this introduction to Christian worship. The baptismal rite was conducted in such a way that it had a definite religious meaning even to the pagan who had virtually no idea of the real nature of Christian doctrine or Christian religious practice.

As the body of Christians grew in any missionary area as a

result of the rapid baptism of pagans, the missionaries devoted a great deal of energy to church building in order to furnish the pagans with a place to exerise their new religion. The resources with which to build churches in missionary areas were usually provided by the recently won converts. Individuals who possessed the necessary wealth often turned property over to the missionaries for this purpose. In the case of the Saxons, Charlemagne required that each community assume the responsibility for building and maintaining a church. Newly won converts often built private churches, although the missionaries attempted to discourage this practice in order to prevent lay control of ecclesiastical property. However, the creation of sufficient churches to provide for the large numbers of converts was not accomplished in a short time. For many years after missionary activity first began the number of churches in areas which had been recently pagan was small.

One of the most serious problems which the missionaries faced was that of providing enough priests to care for the religious life of the new converts. The successes enjoyed by the missionaries in bringing large numbers of pagans to the baptismal front could not be permanent until priests had been established throughout the newly converted territories, thereby insuring further instruction in the Christian faith and the institution or regular Christian practices. In the face of this imperative need for priests, the missionaries employed several methods of overcoming the constant shortage. During the early phases of missionary activity they relied heavily upon help from outside the missionary field. They constantly urged qualified clergymen to leave their settled life and to take up the holy work of caring for the religious needs of newly won converts. This appeal was often answered by young monks and priests who had not yet established themselves in the existing ecclesiastical system. Once in the missionary field they were given charge of missionary churches

and they devoted a great deal of effort to spreading and perfecting the faith among recently converted Christians. Since the organization of the church in the missionary field was usually in its embryonic stage when these outsiders arrived on the scene, there were numerous opportunities for promotion. Many of the priests and monks who migrated to missionary fields in order to help with the pastoral care of converts eventually became the highest ranking ecclesiastical figures in the newly organized church which developed as a result of successful missionary activity. The number of outsiders was never sufficient to fill the need for priests in missionary areas. Another method resorted to overcome this shortage was that of delegating several churches to each priest, thus spreading the available priests thinly over a large area but also insuring each newly established religious center with a minimum of spiritual guidance. However, the only means of ending the shortage of priests was the education of the native inhabitants of newly converted areas for the clergy. To achieve this end schools were organized in conjunction with the missionary monasteries and recently won converts were encouraged to enter these schools in order to receive the training necessary for the clergy. These schools gradually produced enough qualified clergymen to fill the need for priests in recently Christianized areas.

A final step was invariably required to complete the labor of missionaries. This was the organization of the new converts into an episcopal system. This step assured the final victory of Christianity, since Carolingian bishops were the prime agents for promoting vigorous, orthodox Christian life. Although some of the leading missionary figures and the papacy attempted to take the initiative in founding new episcopal sees, the final decision usually lay with the temporal power in the eighth century world. Several important considerations accompanied the creation of new bishoprics. Care was usually taken to create bishop-

rics only after a relatively large number of converts had been won. Episcopal boundaries were usually defined rather carefully, although this was a difficult task in the newly Christianized areas. Episcopal sees were selected with some degree of care, although difficulty was encountered in finding suitable centers of population in areas where cities and towns were almost completely lacking. The newly created sees had to be filled with properly qualified bishops. The usual practice during the Carolingian period was to select bishops from among the clergymen who had long years of experience working among the peoples placed under his control. With the creation of bishoprics for the newly Christianized areas, the need for missonary activity was ended. The formerly pagan areas now resembled the rest of Christendom in most external aspects. Religious life in these areas entered a new phase quite distinct from the missionary phase.

Most of the attention of missionaries was of necessity confined to the external aspects of Christianization. Baptism, the building of churches, the education of priests, and the creation of bishoprics were tasks of such magnitude that little time was left to be devoted to he task of Christianization of converts in the full sense of the word. Thus many of the converts won during the Carolingian period were only nominal Christians. As a result they continued to observe many pagan practices in conjunction with their new religion and to adhere to many of the social habits inherited from their pagan background. Even while the Carolingian missionaries were concentrating on the external aspect of conversion they devoted some attention to the more complete Christianization of the converts. They tried to destroy all pagan religious practices. They sought to change some of the social customs which the new converts inherited from the past and which were contrary to Christian usage. They were especially concerned with presenting the pagans with a brand of religion which would have a deep emotional appeal. By 814 the task of altering the

social and religious system in the missionary areas had not been completed to the extent that the converts were completely Christianized. However, The missionaries had created the means through which Christian civilization would inevitably be imported into areas which in 690 had had virtually no contact with Christianity.

VITA

Richard Eugene Sullivan was born at Doniphan, Nebraska, on March 27, 1921, the son of Eugene M. Sullivan and Iva Mae Sullivan. He was graduated from Doniphan High School in May, 1938, and from the University of Nebraska in June, 1942, with the degree of Bachelor of Arts. After serving in the United States Army Air Forces from September, 1942, to February, 1946, he entered the Graduate College of the University of Illinois in March, 1946. He was granted the degree of Master of Arts in History in February, 1947. He held a research assistantship in the History Department of the University of Illinois from September, 1946, to June, 1948, and a teaching assistantship from September, 1948, to February, 1949.

He was married to Vivianne Carol Johnson of Hanks, North Dakota, on November 6, 1943.